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are new mosaic inscriptions of interest, but most important is an almost complete zodiac, with the Hebrew names of the signs, such as *aryê* = Leo, *bethûlâh* = Virgo, and *moznâyim* = Libra, *sartân* = Cancer. Later iconoclasm has mutilated the figures, as in the Galilean synagogues, but enough is left to furnish material for a most interesting chapter in the history of Jewish culture. It may be added that the building is architecturally inferior, and the superstructure is made of brick instead of stone.

In the middle of April the British, under the direction of Garstang and Phythian-Adams, resumed work at Ascalon. So far attention has been devoted partly to the Byzantine theater around the supposed Pool of Peace, or Pool of Health, and partly to the area at the edge of the old mound, where perpendicular cuttings brought Philistine pottery to light last fall. The intention of the excavators is to take a certain area, and peel the débris off, stratum by stratum. Already in some places the Philistine layer has been passed, and pottery from the first half of the second millennium has been found. Unquestionably important revelations may soon be expected from the old Philistine seaport.

A GREEK SYNAGOGUE INSCRIPTION FROM JERUSALEM

The chief prize of oriental archæology is inscriptions, and as these have been comparatively rare in Palestine their occurrence in that field evokes great interest. In BULLETIN No. 2 we presented the synagogue inscription from 'Ain Duq near Jericho, and Director Albright reports that in the same neighborhood other inscriptions and mosaics of value have been discovered by the Dominican Fathers. Of particular interest is a Greek inscription which was found by Captain Weill in his excavations, 1913-1914, on the Ophel, the southern end of the eastern hill of Jerusalem, the site of the oldest city. (For these excavations see the explorer's work, *La Cité de David*, P. Geuthner, Paris.) It is only since the War that this inscription has been made public.

Our frontispiece gives a facsimile of the inscription. Its translation is as follows.

"Theodotos son of Vettenos, priest and synagogue chief, son of a synagogue chief, grandson of a synagogue chief, constructed the synagogue for the reading of the law and the teaching of the Commandments [i. e. the Law and the Mishna], and also its chambers and water arrangements, for a hostelry for those coming from abroad who have need of them—which [synagogue] was built by his fathers and the elders and Simonides."

Many suggestions and problems arise in the interpretation of this text. The father of the donor bears a Latin name, and was probably a freedman of the family Vettius. Who Simonides was we do not learn. Theodotos was the Greek rendering of the Hebrew Nathaniel or a like name. The donor himself was of priestly and archisynagoga rank by inheritance, and it appears that he had an inherited interest in the structure. We might weave a romance of the freedman's son coming back a rich man to the city of his fathers—Cicero has a good deal to say of a banker of his day, one Vettienus—and taking an interest in the pious work of his ancestors, repairing it and perhaps adding the waterworks. The light thrown on the ménage of a synagogue in ancient Jerusalem is most valuable, but of special interest is the combination that at once comes to mind with the Synagogue of the Libertines, i. e. Freedmen, referred to in Acts 6 : 8, whose members were among those who opposed St. Stephen.

The donor belonged by birth to that class and his intention in the establishment was for people from foreign parts, so that a most plausible identification may be assumed. There remains the question of the date. While it has been argued that the inscription may belong to the age of Trajan when the Jews were trying to reestablish residence in Jerusalem, it is much more likely that the building operations referred to belong to the period before the destruction of the city, A. D. 70. The inscription would then be contemporaneous to the scenes and writings of the New Testament.

The inscription has called forth several learned monographs, namely by Clermont-Ganneau, in *Syria*, vol. 1, p. 191; Weill, *Rev. des études juives*, vol. 71, p. 30; T. Reinach, *ibid.*, p. 46; Marmorstein, *Quarterly Statement*, 1921, p. 23; Vincent, *Revue biblique*, 1921, p. 247.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY AT ASKELON

The excavation of Askelon by Professor Garstang, under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, is going steadily forward. Late in June the excavators uncovered, so the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* announces, the famous colonnade around the great court which was built by Herod the Great. Josephus describes the wonderful workmanship of this cloister. It was only one of the splendid structures built by that king. Statues of Apollo, Venus, and a giant statue of Herod himself were also found. The information reached London by telegraph just in time for the annual meeting of the Fund. Further and fuller information will be awaited with great interest.

AN INTERESTING ARCHÆOLOGICAL COLLECTION

Professor Max L. Kellner, of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the fortunate possessor of a valuable collection of flints, pottery, and glass from Syria and Palestine, which deserves to be much more widely known than it is. The collection was made in 1913-14. Some of it was discovered in caves of the stone age near the Dog River, seven miles north of Beirut, which Professor Kellner and Dr. Arthur Peabody, of Harvard, explored, and some of it represents purchases and surface finds made in or near Jerusalem. The flints are from both the Old Stone Age and the Later Stone Age and include many interesting forms. Of especial interest is an axe from the Old Stone Age which was picked up by Professor Kellner on Mount Scopus, just north of the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. It may have been used by the cave dwellers who, more than five thousand years ago, formed the first settlement about the Ain Sitti Miriam, the Biblical Gihon, whose habitations were discovered by Parker in 1909-11. It had lain on Scopus through all the varied history of Jerusalem.

The pottery (sixty odd pieces) consists of well-preserved specimens from the Amorite, Canaanite, and Hebrew periods. The glass (forty odd pieces) is made up of excellent examples of the principal varieties of glass objects found in tombs of the Greek and Roman periods. Most of the objects are perfect of their kind and some of them are rare. Especially beautiful is a claret-colored glass jar ornamented with threads of glass in relief, and a glass flask (also claret colored) moulded in the form of a cluster of grapes. The collection is mentioned here because it represents so well

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THE SYNAGOGUE INSCRIPTION OF THEODOTON, DISCOVERED ON THE OPHEL (see p. 13).